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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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TAGS: [UNGA](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: UNGA: JUNE 28-30 INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE UN
COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

REF: A. (A) STATE 108132

[B.](#) (B) STATE 100481

[C.](#) (C) STATE 76209

[D.](#) (D) 6/23/06 UNGA CT STRATEGY WORKING PAPER

[1.](#) Summary: General Assembly members gathered for informal consultations on the draft UN Global Counter-Terrorism strategy from June 28-30. Many had detailed line-in, line-out comments while reserving the right to provide additional comments separately to the co-chairs of the discussion. The most contentious issues include the lack of a definition for terrorism, the exclusion of references to state terrorism, self-determination, and struggle against foreign occupation, the appropriate role of the Security Council with regard to counter-terrorism oversight, the implications of codes of conduct for journalists, counter-terrorism capacity building for developing nations, and the time-crunched pace of the strategy-negotiating process. End Summary.

[2.](#) General Assembly members gathered for discussion of the draft UN Global Counter-Terrorism strategy from June 28-30 in accordance with the mandate set out in the World Summit Outcome document of September 2005. Algeria, Japan, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan, Guatemala, Austria (on behalf of the EU), Cuba, Columbia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Egypt, Canada, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Switzerland, Turkey, Libya, Indonesia, Venezuela, Kuwait, Iran, the Philippines, Lebanon, India, Syria, and Palau were among the delegations that spoke in addition to the United States. Given the short time with which the delegations had to prepare for the discussions only a few have distributed written proposals to date. (Those have been forwarded to Dept.)

State-Terrorism, Self-Determination, and Foreign Occupation

[3.](#) Algeria, Mexico, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and, most adamantly, Venezuela, noted that the document still lacks reference to the right of people to fight for self-determination, struggle against foreign occupation and state terrorism. Many of these delegations argued that these concepts are protected under the right of self-defense in the UN Charter. Venezuela accused the co-chairs of ignoring "the voice of the majority and truth" to include such references and stated its unwillingness to negotiate if state-terrorism is excluded.

[4.](#) Most of these delegations called for greater acknowledgment of the conditions that lead to terrorism. The strategy of combating terrorism without attention to the root causes of terrorism, Iran argued, exacerbates the problem by allowing countries to breach international law, often resulting in high collateral damage, under the pretext of countering terrorism. Iran noted that previous

counter-terrorism bodies had stated the need for a solution to root causes of terrorism while recognizing a right to self-determination. As early as 1972, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 30/34, "Measures to Prevent International Terrorism," stating the need to address root causes of terrorism in the wake of the Munich hostage crisis. Indonesia supported the forming of a non-exhaustive list of conditions leading to terrorism as a basis for the global strategy.

¶5. Venezuela continued that the current text is written from a contemporary Western point of view, and Egypt, Libya, and Iran stated that the overemphasis on religious links to terrorist acts in the document implies that the global strategy is to target Islamic fanaticism. (Comment: The co-chairs had included such references at the request of the OIC. End Comment.)

Content

¶6. Egypt labeled the current draft a "Christmas Tree" on which delegations are hanging ornaments unrelated to terrorism, most specifically disarmament, debate over which is stalling adoption of the strategy and fracturing the possibility of a unified front against terrorism. Iran and Lebanon were among the delegations that supported removing disarmament language from the strategy. Syria also supported its removal, stating that any non-proliferation language that does not call for full disarmament by all members does nothing to guarantee non-use by terrorists. Canada, however, proposed strengthening the document's support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to counter proliferation and Sri Lanka welcomed language concerning weapons of mass destruction. India favored the creation of a

concise, simple consensus document steering clear of controversial topics, which can be addressed later in the General Assembly.

General Assembly Primacy

¶7. Canada supported the EU position that the document use stronger language in calling for full compliance with Security Council resolutions, most notably 1373. Egypt, Cuba, and several other delegations insisted on language asserting the primacy of the General Assembly in combating terrorism and criticized the strategy document for focusing too heavily on the Security Council's role. Egypt in particular, with the support of Iran, Indonesia, Lebanon, and Brazil, stated that the current text encourages the Security Council to encroach on the GA, and called for the removal of all sections that reference the SC. Iran condemned the categorization of terrorist states and listing and delisting procedures by SC committees through non-transparent mechanisms and called for the transfer of this power to the GA to be exercised in a transparent manner.

¶8. In terms of monitoring compliance, the EU said the draft should replace language from earlier versions, calling on the three committees to develop standards for measuring states' compliance with their obligations under the relevant resolutions. Algeria said the language concerning the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) should be strengthened to require compliance with FATF standards for all UN member states, and said the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) should give particular importance to those standards. Indonesia stated that an ongoing process of review by a counter-terrorism body would be much more effective and involved than annual or bi-annual review meetings.

¶9. Syria called for the creation of an international counter-terrorism center in Riyadh, and reiterated its support for the OIC's strategy from the Ten Year Program of

Action adopted by the Third Extraordinary Summit, held in Makkah Al-Mukarammah last December.

Capacity Building

¶10. The EU requested changing the language on technical assistance to indicate that capacity building should be the central aspect of the UN's counter-terrorism efforts. Japan questioned the language on funding technical assistance, saying first that the strategy should be mindful of existing mechanisms like the G-8 Counter-Terrorism Action Group (CTAG) that provide technical assistance and then arguing that language to suggest that technical assistance efforts would be funded through assessed contributions was inappropriate. Palau called for the creation of a fund to assist developing nations who have the desire but not the resources to combat terrorism. UN partner agencies, such as Interpol, are not universal to developing nations because of the expensive cost of membership.

Codes of Conduct for Journalists

¶11. Several delegations, including Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, cautioned against language concerning codes of conduct for journalists, warning that this could stifle free expression. The EU sought to expand on a section of the draft to include stronger language concerning combating terrorist propaganda.

Victims' Compensation

¶12. Sri Lanka supported an assistance system for victims of terrorism, but did not address concerns from delegations, such as Columbia, that such compensation seems to support reparations. Syria raised the need for further explanation of such a compensation scheme, asking its supporters how financial responsibility would be apportioned following an act of terrorism and how victims and amounts would be established in the absence of a terrorism definition.

International Law

¶13. Many delegations commented on the need for references to the rule of law, due process, human rights law, refugee law, and international law. Some emphasized that the Human Rights

Council (HRC) should play a preeminent role in monitoring human rights and terrorism. Others, including Cuba, said the strategy should refer to the GA's central role and past resolutions on human rights and terrorism. The EU suggested new language to indicate that governments must not use counter-terrorism as a justification for political repression.

Drafting Process

¶14. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria noted the need for bilateral and multilateral negotiations between states as opposed to the current flood of competing suggestions to the co-chairs and texts produced by the facilitators. Egypt also suggested that a negotiated counter-terrorism strategy should be ready for adoption via a high-level meeting at the start of the 61st Session of the General Assembly.

¶15. Pakistan, South Africa, Syria, and several other NAM delegations said the negotiations on the draft strategy had been too rushed and called for delays. Turkey called the discussion sessions a "waste of time," since no delegations

had time to submit their changes in writing and no one could possibly take notes fast enough to record the many line item suggestions. Saudi Arabia called for at least one month for delegations to review drafts and consult their capitals unless there was an emergency.

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